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Yemaya

ICSF'S NEWSLETTER ON GENDER AND FISHERIES

ICSF

25 Years in Support of Small-scale Fishworkers

From the Editor

Delegates to the Tenth Conference of Parties (COP10) of the Convention on Biological Diversity entering the conference centre in Nagoya, Japan in October 2010, could not have missed seeing a group of men, women and children holding up banners and symbols made of wood, cloth, leaves and twigs. Their message was unequivocal: "No Nuclear Power Plant in Our Community! Iwaishima says No to Nuclear Power!" As part of the "Seven Generations March", this group had walked for 45 days covering 800 km to be in Nagoya, to protest against the proposed Kaminoseki nuclear power plant to be built on a landfill in the Seto Inland Sea, hailed as Japan's Galapagos. For three decades, local residents, fisherfolk, and environmental activists have opposed the plant.

Such opposition has been recorded in many countries. In India, fishing communities have led protests against nuclear power plants in coastal areas, resisting their proposed displacement and loss of access to fishing grounds. Their protests have highlighted the potential impact on fisheries resources and biodiversity due to the large numbers of juvenile fish sucked into inlet water systems and the higher temperature of waters discharged; the harmful impact of radiation from nuclear power plants; and above all, the frightening possibility of a nuclear accident.

Across the world, governments and the scientific community have maintained that such problems can be "managed". Nuclear energy has been touted as the energy of the future—clean, cheap, safe, reliable and 'climate-friendly'. While each of these claims is disputable, the nuclear option has been powerfully challenged by the Fukushima Dai-Ichi nuclear power plant disaster in Japan—a country better prepared for such disasters than most—triggered by the massive earthquake and tsunami on 11 March.

The emergency response system in Fukushima seems to have failed despite improved safety standards laid out following the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami by the Japan Nuclear Energy Safety Organization (JNES) in collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and despite the implementation of a system since 2010 for the protection of nuclear power plants against tsunamis and post-earthquake considerations in the external zone (TiPEEZ).

While countries take up "comprehensive safety reviews" of their nuclear plants, the topmost question is: "Can the chances of another nuclear accident due to any reason—natural or man-made, including human error—be completely eliminated?" If not, surely there is need to reassess hazards and costs that may affect not only our own generation but several generations to come. By what measure can costs to future generations be calculated?

There are other questions as well. Why should people who have no say in decisionmaking have to pay the price for 'growth' and 'development'? How valid are existing cost calculations when the disposal of hazardous radioactive waste remains an unresolved problem with reports of illegal dumping in the world's seas? Public health monitoring and impact analyses of radiation leaks are either not undertaken or not shared. Nuclear power remains dangerously shrouded in official secrecy. And people continue to be exposed to its risks without any form of informed consent.

Even as we salute the workers battling nuclear meltdown at tremendous personal risk in Fukushima, and mourn those killed, injured and rendered homeless by the disaster, it is time for us to heed the people of Iwaishima whose struggles recall the famous Native American proverb: "In our every deliberation we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations".

The Gender Handbook

A new field handbook developed by the Regional Fisheries Livelihoods Programme for South and Southeast Asia highlights the contribution of women, helping enhance the chances of success for projects targeting small-scale fisheries

By **Steve Needham** (Steve.Needham@fao.org), Information Officer, Regional Fisheries Livelihoods Programme, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Thailand

As part of its efforts to promote gender equity to improve fisheries livelihoods, the Regional Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (RFLP) for South and Southeast Asia is developing a field handbook that gives guidance on taking gender into account in all phases of small-scale fisheries development projects. To discuss a draft version of the handbook, a meeting of government and field project staff, researchers as well as representatives of NGOs and international organizations from around the region was organized in the historic Cambodian city of Siem Reap from 2-5 November 2010. Participants looked at best practices for mainstreaming gender in the fisheries sector and also field-tested the tools contained in the handbook.

"Women play a significant role in fisheries, yet lack of attention to gender can result in policies or programmes failing to improve livelihoods or reduce vulnerability of fishing communities," said Jose Parajua, Regional Manager of the Spanish-funded RFLP. "So much attention is paid to gender; however few people really have much idea about how it can be incorporated into project planning," said the RFLP's Angela Lentisco. "When the RFLP started in late 2009, we realized that there was very little information available. The usual approach seems to be to simply ensure that a certain number of women participate in training. We thought about making something that would help people understand gender and give practical guidance on how it can be integrated into projects."

RFLP

Women play an important role in fisheries. Lack of attention to gender results in policy or programme failures to improve livelihoods

The main objectives of the handbook are to introduce key gender concepts while also building the capacity to identify gender issues in fisheries development projects. The publication provides information on the rationale, concepts and approaches related to mainstreaming gender in development co-operation. It presents an overview of the role of women in the Southeast Asian fisheries sector as well as tools to help integrate gender into various stages of the project cycle.

Tools include an activity analysis which helps map the activities of men and women in their daily lives; an analysis of access by men and women to resources and benefits (for example, cash/income, boats, markets, information, community groups, and so on); and an analysis on gender needs (for example, access to training, credit, education, clean water, and so on). The handbook is designed to be user-friendly and meant for project managers, field officers, those in contact with communities, or others involved in designing projects or initiatives.

"The main mistake lies in not understanding people's real needs. We have to avoid the idea that just by working with women everything is okay. You cannot just separate women as a different stakeholder group and expect them to become involved in various activities. This increases their burden as it does not take into account other commitments, such as household work or supporting the men. You need to have a really good understanding of what women's needs and expectations are beforehand. This is where the handbook will play a valuable role," said Angela.

Participants at the workshop had the chance to test the tools in the handbook at a number of fishing communities around Tonle Sap Lake. The field testing was a valuable experience, revealing the considerable contribution of women in these communities.

"Many women said they went fishing with their husbands but that they were only helping and did not define their contribution as work. They did not valorize what they did. Women also fetched water by hand while

the men would only do so if they could use a motorcycle. Yet the preconception exists that only men could pull up the nets and so the men's contribution was recognized while the women's was not," Angela said.

At the same time, however, the field visits made clear how complex gender roles can be and how difficult it may be to assess them accurately. Considerable feedback on the draft of the handbook was generated during the workshop, which will be incorporated into the final version.

"The handbook can always be improved but only if people use it and help refine it. The aim is to provide simple advice and tools that help make the work women do visible and to help project planners and managers consider the impact of any activities on women," said Angela.

For more information on the field manual 'Mainstreaming gender into project cycle management in the fishery sector' or to register interest in receiving a copy, please contact angela.lentisco@fao.org

The handbook aims to provide advice and tools to make women's roles more visible.

PROFILE

Supaporn Pannarai

Supaporn leads the Network of Women from Songkhla Lake set up to conserve and manage natural resources in the region

This profile is by **Kesinee Kwaenjaroen** (kasineek@gmail.com), Sustainable Development Foundation, Thailand

Supaporn Pannarai is chairperson of the Network of Women from Songkhla Lake. Born in 1966, she started fishing when she was 14, accompanying her father on his fishing trips. The island of her birth, Ban Chong Fuen, is located in Pattalung Province, right in the middle of Songkhla Lake. 15 years later, however, Supaporn was forced to give up fishing, as, by this time, there was scarcely any fish left to catch. "My childhood memory", Supaporn recalls, "is that the lake was rich and community members lived happily on the basis of mutual aid. The surplus fish was sold at local markets and shared with neighbours. But now the lake is not as rich as before and more and more people go to work outside."

What caused this change? The answer to this lies in the history of development in this region. The Songkhla Lake, Thailand's largest natural lake, is located on the Malay Peninsula in the southern part of the country. Covering an area of 1040 sq km, it borders the provinces of Songkhla and Phattalung. There are three distinct lakes: Thale Noi, Thale Luang and Thale Sap from north to south, which are interconnected by narrow channels. A narrow strait of about 380m width connects Thale Sap with the Gulf of Thailand at its southeastern end. A gradient of salinity exists, therefore, between the brackish water of Thale Sap and the pure freshwater of Thale Noi. The middle lake, Thale Luang, approaches a freshwater condition during the rainy season, but is influenced by the invasion of seawater in other months.

In recent decades the increase in the numbers of fishing vessels and the intensification of fish processing has led to overfishing and degradation. One of the direct causes of the degradation of natural resources and the decrease in marine life has been the closing off of what is called Pak Rawa (the mouth of Rawa) that prevents seawater from entering the lake, significantly changing the lake's ecology and leading to a decline in fisheries resources. Equally destructive has been the construction of a deep-sea port in the provincial town of Songkhla. These developments have completely changed the ecosystem of the lake. To survive, people are being forced to abandon fishing for other occupations. The roles and livelihoods of women in the fishing communities have also changed. Women from fishing villages are forced to take up external employment, particularly in the fish processing industry. Men have also had to take up alternative employment outside the fishery sector to secure adequate daily incomes.

These changes have deeply affected social relationships as well. Supaporn understands this and pledges to do whatever she can to prevent further deterioration, both of the natural environment and of community relationships. "People are more individualistic," says Supaporn. "Family members do not live together. We do not have time to enjoy with friends as before. Therefore, I would like to help in whatever way I can to recover the lake." The Network of Women from Songkhla Lake, which Supaporn leads, is a progressive formation set up in June 2003 by women working around Songkhla Lake to recover, conserve and manage natural resources in the region. It focuses on conserving food security and the lake's natural resources. It also tries to build the capacities of local women as agents of change in their communities.

Giving voice to European fisherwomen

A recently-held public hearing in Europe demonstrated that women in fisheries are fast gaining public visibility and may soon play an important institutional role in crafting their own future

By **Katia Frangoudes** (Katia.Frangoudes@univ-brest.fr), Member, ICSF and facilitator of the European Network of Women's Organizations in Fisheries (AKTEA)

The Committee on Fisheries of the European Parliament organized a public hearing on 'Women and the sustainable development of fisheries areas' on 01 December 2010. The public hearing was initiated by Josefa Andrés Barea, Member of the European Parliament (MEP), who is responsible for gender mainstreaming on this committee. European women's organizations were invited to speak about their work, their problems and perspectives. The AKTEA network and some of its members participated in this event. The European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Maria Damanaki, also participated in the hearing.

After Carmen Estevez Fraga, chair of the Committee on Fisheries, opened the session and welcomed participants, Barea explained that the objectives of the hearing were to gain more knowledge about women's contribution to fisheries and to support women's actions. Next, Damanaki spoke about the European Commission's policies and initiatives on women in fisheries. She explained that the Commission had adopted the Women's Charter to reinforce its commitment to promoting equality between men and women in all EU policy areas. For the implementation of the objectives of the Charter, the Commission adopted a specific strategy in September 2010. Within this framework, said Damanaki, the Commission would "encourage the creation of women's organizations at local, regional and European level". She highlighted the role of informal women's groups, who contribute to the fisheries industry as well as to communities but fail to benefit from public subsidies. She recommended the establishment of formal networks similar to those set up in Spain and called upon all Member States to "constitute similar networks everywhere". Reaffirming women's contributions to fisheries and the role of women's informal organizations to fisheries communities, the Commissioner pledged to promote the creation of national networks financed by the European Fisheries Fund.

KATIA FRANGOUDES

The public hearing on 'Women and the sustainable development of fisheries areas', invited women's organizations to speak about their work, problems and perspectives

Following the official presentations, the floor was given to women's organizations representing different countries and levels of organization. Marja Bekendam, chair of AKTEA and member of *Vin Vis*, the Dutch women in fisheries network, explained that AKTEA—a network of fisherwomen's organizations from 11 European countries—was created in 2006. AKTEA's main objective is the promotion of fisherwomen's rights in Europe. It lobbies at the European level for the recognition of women's roles in the fisheries, the attribution of a legal status to all women contributing to family fishing enterprises in all Member States, the participation of women's organizations in the decision-making process on fisheries management, the promotion of women's visibility in fisheries, the support of women's initiatives by European structural funds, as well as the maintenance of fisheries communities.

Bekendam stressed the problems encountered by AKTEA, for example, the lack of funding and leadership experience, communication difficulties due to the different languages spoken by members, and so on. Despite these shortcomings, Bekendam pointed out, AKTEA had several achievements to its credit. These included participating in two public hearings, one in 2005 and the next in 2010, by the European Parliament; lobbying successfully for a vote by the European

Parliament in favour of a women's network within fishing communities in 2005; lobbying successfully for an EC communication in favour of the integration of women's organizations in the Regional Advisory Council (RAC) in 2008; and the publication by the European Parliament of a report on the role of women in the sustainable development of European Fisheries Areas.

Clarisse Canha from the Azores spoke on behalf of the island's network of fisherwomen's organizations established in 2008. Women's contributions, she pointed out, are very important in small-scale fisheries. "In the Azores, women undertake different tasks," said Clarissa. "They are boat owners, skippers, fish-sellers, administrators for family fishing enterprises, workers in local processing plants, and so on." The network has very close relations with the Portuguese network, Estrela do Mar, and is a member of the South Atlantic RAC.

Next, Leslie Duthie, speaking on behalf of the North Sea Women's Network (NSWN), highlighted its major function, namely, its participation in the North Sea RAC. The network plays an important role within this RAC, chairing the socioeconomic working group and ensuring that new fisheries management regulations take into account the social and economic consequences on fishermen's families and fisheries communities. Leslie explained that in 2010, NSWN also became a working member of the Pelagic RAC.

Adriana Celestini, chair of the Penelope Association based in Ancona in Italy, spoke next about the role of fishermen's wives in fishing family enterprises in Italy. Fishermen's wives contribute considerably to family fishing enterprises by undertaking a number of different tasks, mainly administrative. The exception is in Ancona, where fishermen's wives play a crucial role in selling the fish. Fishermen's wives, mothers or sisters are responsible for bringing fish to the auction; if the price is too low, they take the fish back, selling it either to fish shops or taking it to other cities for sale. The women have to wake up at 2 a.m., leaving their children either alone at home or in the care of other family members. The Penelope Association is a member of the executive committee of the Mediterranean RAC.

Monique Philip, representing the national federation of French fisherwomen, spoke about the establishment of women's organizations in France. She explained how French fishermen's wives managed to obtain the legal status of collaborative spouse, which officially recognizes women's contribution to fisheries. This specific status gives fishermen's wives access to their own retirement pension, to free professional training, and to membership of fishermen's organizations. She highlighted the difficulties faced by women's organizations in France in accessing European Fisheries Funds (EFF) through recounting the experiences of the local association of Arcachon, which had submitted a project to the local authority for the establishment of a workshop for processing local fish. The project was rejected on the grounds that they didn't have the necessary funds (Euro 50,000) to undertake the feasibility study, and that EFF funding can be claimed only after a project has been undertaken and paid for. If women had this kind of money, they wouldn't need public subsidies, Philip pointed out.

Natalia Laino of AGAMAR, an organization representing women shellfish gathers in Galicia, Spain, not a member of AKTEA, spoke about the problems of shellfish gatherers, their difficult working conditions and the

The public hearing demonstrated that women in fisheries are gaining more recognition and becoming more publicly visible.

What's New, Webby?

Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries for the Asian Fisheries Society

Genderaquafish.org is a global information exchange website on gender in aquaculture and fisheries. It was launched in September 2010, with an initial focus on the third Global Symposium on Gender and Aquaculture and Fisheries (GAF3), to be held on 21-22 April, 2011. This symposium will take place during the Ninth Asian Fisheries and Aquaculture Forum, to be held in China between 21 to 25 April.

The site provides updated information about the upcoming symposium. It also provides a wide range of resources, including fishery-related news from different parts of the world. A glossary of terms on gender in fisheries and aquaculture is also provided to help users understand the difference in some of the important terms such as gender equity and gender equality. The updated version of the glossary is now available on the website.

Milestones

By **Chandrika Sharma** (icsf@icsf.net), Executive Secretary, ICSF

COFI takes landmark decision on small-scale fisheries

The Twenty-Ninth session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) that met in Rome from 31 January to 4 February 2011 approved the development of a new international instrument on small-scale fisheries to complement the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), drawing on relevant existing instruments. The Committee agreed that, in view of the important role played by small-scale fisheries, FAO should continue to give priority to small-scale fisheries and ensure adequate visibility for them, particularly in relevant international fora, which deal directly or indirectly with these fisheries.

The proposal to develop a new instrument was supported by over 20 countries that included Brazil, Norway, Thailand, South Africa, Morocco, Namibia, Russia, Chile, Mauritania, Indonesia, Oman, Mozambique, Afghanistan, Mexico, United States of America, Angola, Algeria, Mauritius, Cameroon and Ivory Coast. Norway and Brazil specifically suggested that the proposed instrument take into consideration the rights and interests of women. The Committee agreed that the new instrument could take the form of international guidelines, be voluntary in nature, address both inland and marine fisheries and focus on the needs of developing countries. The Committee recommended that all stakeholders be associated, as appropriate, with its development.

The coming period should see the development of these guidelines. Small-scale fishworker and support groups, who have been advocating for such an international instrument for several years, are hopeful that the instrument will address and secure the human rights—social, economic, cultural, civil and political—of small-scale and artisanal fishworkers and fishing communities in both countries of the North and South.

The extent that the instrument reflects their aspirations remains to be seen, as some States are of the view that human rights-related issues are outside the mandate of COFI. Also to be seen is the extent to which the proposed guidelines recognize, protect and promote the rights of women within fisheries. In a year in which the world celebrates the centennial of International Women's Day, this is particularly critical.

occupational health hazards they face. She called upon the EU to pay more attention to small-scale fisheries during the revision of the Common Fisheries Policy.

González Serrano, Deputy Director of the General Secretariat for the Sea (Secretaría General del Mar), of the Spanish Ministry of the Environment, Rural and Marine Affairs made a presentation on the Spanish network of women in the fisheries. Established by the fisheries administration and financed by the EFF, this is a virtual, internet-based network. It publishes references to women in fisheries and women's initiatives. It also organizes an annual meeting bringing together women in fisheries from the different regions. The first meeting, involving 350 women, was held in October 2010.

The presentations were followed by an interactive session between the MEPs and the representatives of women's organizations. The MEPs expressed surprise that the contributions of fishermen's wives are largely unrecognized. The problem of accessing public subsidies, particularly the EFF, was discussed and a suggestion made that the Chair of the Fisheries Commission could bring this issue to the notice of the European Council of Ministers. It was decided that a summary of the day's discussion would be presented before the Fisheries Commission.

The public hearing demonstrated that women in fisheries are gaining more recognition and becoming more publicly visible. Women are now willing to lobby European institutions. The fact that AKTEA was invited to the event proves that AKTEA today enjoys recognition at the EU level. However, the proposal of the European Commissioner to finance a European Network, more institutionalized than AKTEA, could potentially marginalize AKTEA. For this reason, AKTEA should grasp the opportunity to be part of, and to guide, the establishment of the future network. This question also came up during AKTEA's annual meeting held in Brussels: should AKTEA become an institutional network or should it continue to work as an activist network? Members agreed that the network should move towards institutionalization because it needs public subsidies to ensure its expansion and to develop its activity in all member states. AKTEA will now request a meeting with the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) to discuss the possibilities of becoming the official European network.

The Seaweed Harvesters of Alao

While archaeological evidence confirms that inhabitants of the Chiloe archipelago used sea-plants for food and medicine, today's islanders sell off all the harvest. A fun workshop brings back to the island its ancient practices

By **Irene Novaczek** (inovaczek@upei.ca), Director, Institute of Islands Studies, University of Prince Edward Island, Canada

In February 2011, I travelled from Prince Edward Island, Canada, where I live, to the archipelago of Chiloe, off the southern coast of Chile. As the Director of the Institute of Island Studies at the University of Prince Edward Island (http://www.islandstudies.com), my purpose was to meet with representatives of the ARCIS Patagonia University as well as an indigenous tribal council, the Williche Council of Chiefs, who have been our partners in research projects since 2005. I was taken to the Quinchao group of islands, which lie along the eastern flank of Chiloe, to visit the tiny island of Alao. Alao is home to only a few hundred people, many of whom are considered to be poor; they often rely on harvesting seaweeds for cash income.

On arrival at the wharf in Alao we were greeted by the sight of a local farmer-fisherman driving a pair of oxen. Pigs and chickens and an assortment of dogs roamed through the hamlet next to the wharf where the island's school, the medical clinic, a dilapidated church and a small number of houses were located. Our boat had brought to Alao its paramedic, who looks after the clinic. From the wharf that we had alighted, a ferry boat transports the people of Alao to other islands nearby. There is only one tiny shop on the island selling a few basic supplies such as cooking oil, rice and sugar, but a wider selection is available on the other islands.

The dominant sea-plant harvested on Alao is the large, fleshy, red *luga* (*Gigartina scottsbergii*). *Luga* is dried on the beach, stuffed into bags and transported to the mainland to be sold to factories that extract carrageenan. Carrageenan is used in a wide variety of food processing and pharmaceutical applications. It is the natural gum that, among other things, holds the chocolate in suspension in chocolate milk and keeps the medicine together in pills. It also makes ice cream creamy and factory chickens juicy. Another sea-plant, which is cultivated for commercial sale on Alao, is *pelillo* (*Gracilaria chilensis*). This is valued for its agar content and is also sold to factories that extract the agar for use in a variety of industries.

Seaweed harvesting was not always such a dominant feature of Alao's local economy. Twenty years ago a visitor would have seen many small fishing boats actively catching a wide variety of fish. But then, say the locals, dragger boats came from the mainland, tore up the bottom and caught all sorts of fish indiscriminately and in large quantities. Today, fishers report that there is no fish stock left that is worth the effort of fishing commercially. A few boats still go out to sea, but only to catch a few fish to feed their families, and only when there is nothing else to do.

On Alao, it seems there is always something important to do to support a family. There are vegetable gardens to tend, which produce the small red, white, yellow and blue native potatoes and the giant bulbs of garlic for which Chiloe is famous. There are pastures with livestock, especially beef cattle and the oxen and ponies that are called on to transport

IRENE NOVACZEK

The training workshop for the people of Alao demonstrated the use of seaweeds for food and medicine

goods from place to place—there being only one truck and no cars on the island. And of course there is seaweed to pick, especially on the rocky north shore where *luga* is abundant. On this shore, there are also ancient *corrales de pesca*, or fish traps built of stone, which the aboriginal people used for fishing thousands of years ago.

Because I have expertise in marine botany and run a small business making and selling sea-plant products on Prince Edward Island, I was asked to provide a training workshop for the people of Alao on how to use seaweeds for food and medicine. This is something I have done on many small islands of the world where people are engaged in harvesting sea-plants for sale to international corporations because often, the harvesters do not recognize that these same plants can be used in other ways to support the health, nutrition and income of their families. The harvesting, drying and transporting of seaweeds is back-breaking labour, which usually earns very little money. The fishing families involved often suffer from poor health and food insecurity because of their marginal incomes, so it is important for them to understand how to maximize the benefits from the seaweeds they harvest.

The fishing families involved often suffer from poor health and food insecurity because of their marginal incomes, so it is important for them to understand how to maximize the benefits from the seaweeds they harvest.

On Alao, as in Chiloe generally, people commonly eat only two seaweeds. *Cochayuyo* (*Durvillea antarctica*) is a large, brown, leathery sea-plant, harvested from the cold waters of the Pacific coast, and can be found in many traditional soups and stews. *Luche* (*Porphyra columbina*) appears as small, translucent blades in shallow, sheltered waters and is a common feature in shellfish soup. Many rural people also remember how some other species were used by their ancestors. For example, the green sea lettuce, called *lamilla* (*Ulva lactuca*) was traditionally used as fertilizer for growing potatoes but is now a neglected resource since most farmers have shifted from organic to chemical methods. *Llapin* (*Nothogenia fastigiata*), another red algae containing carrageenan, is still sometimes used by farmers to feed young pigs who are not growing well. Finally, there is a kelp called *sargazo* (*Macrocystis pyrifera*) that the aboriginal Williche people would use to heal broken bones. Modern science and the rapidly growing health food movement recognize that all these species and many more that can be seen on the shores of Alao are edible and/or medicinal, yet most of these resources are either entirely ignored or used in a very limited way. Recent research on Chiloe suggests that the tradition of using sea-plants is a cultural asset that is in danger of fading away.

I found that on Alao the use of sea-plants for food or agriculture is rare, and medicinal uses are non-existent. No one makes any use of the *luga* and *pellilo* that they harvest for sale. This is a pattern I have noted among seaweed harvesters in many small islands of the world, but it is perhaps more surprising in the Chiloe archipelago when one considers the archaeological evidence of seaweed use over thousands of years. In 2008 it was reported that nine species of marine algae were recovered from hearths and storage spaces of ancient homes unearthed at Monte Verde II, on the mainland of Chile close to the Chiloe archipelago. These remains were dated to be from between 14,220 and 13,980 years before the present, indicating the use of seaweeds by the people who lived at the site at that time. The seaweeds were mixed together with medicinal herbs in half chewed cuds, leading the archaeologists to conclude that they were used for both food and medicine. It is most likely that the original occupants of the Chiloe archipelago shared the sea-plant knowledge and practices in evidence at near-by Monte Verde. Yet today, people are unaware that many of those species found at Monte Verde, including *luga*, have any potential use as food or medicine.

We started our work on Alao by moving about meeting women and inviting them to a workshop to be held the following day. When we learned that there was already a workshop on how to build a greenhouse scheduled for the afternoon, we decided to start our workshop mid-morning with the intention of preparing a lunch featuring a variety of seaweed dishes for all of the workshop participants. Participants were invited to show up at 10 am and bring some food to share—either a few vegetables, some shellfish or smoked fish. Then we went out to the beach to harvest some of the most commonly available edible and medicinal sea-plants. In no time we had bags of *luga*, *llapin*, *lamella*, *luche* and *sargazo*, which we carefully washed to remove all sand and bits of debris, and then laid out to dry. The larger plants were pegged onto clotheslines, to the bemusement of the locals. The smaller ones were spread on clean newspapers on top of chairs and tables in the clinic, where we were to spend the night. That evening we perched our teacups in the small spaces between fronds of seaweed on the desk we were using as a dining table.

The next morning we took over the kitchen of the school, which opened into a dining room with long wooden tables perfect for displaying our marine treasures. As participants filtered in, they were set to work washing, peeling and chopping vegetables and seafood, and preparing bread dough. Once the room was full, we started talking about the different seaweeds, how they could be used, their nutritional value and medicinal properties. Recipes for the day were written on craft paper

and hung on the wall so that everyone could make their own copies. I told stories about seaweeds from other islands, including the one about Jamaica where young men believe that the seaweeds containing jelly have aphrodisiac properties. That's always a good one for breaking the ice!

First we oven dried three different sea-plants—one red, one green and one brown—to make them crispy, after which some of our child participants gleefully crumbled them into small flakes using a rolling pin. These flakes were sprinkled into the bread dough to make vitamin-and mineral-enriched rolls. Then we tossed *luga* and *llapin* into pots of hot milk and cooked them until they disappeared and the milk became very thick. Half of the milk jelly was mixed with honey and vanilla and poured into a pan to cool into a delicious pudding. The other pot of thickened milk was mixed with smoked fish, smoked mussels, sautéed onion and garlic and a handful of crushed smoked chillies. This was also poured into a pan to cool and set into a jelly. Finally, we boiled up a huge pot of fish and vegetables and tossed in every sort of seaweed available. The results were delicious and we were especially happy to hear the women asking if they could use milk from their cows to make the pudding. Of course they can, and we hope they will, because at this point no one on Alao milks their cows. They claim that the children don't like milk so they get very sugary tea or Nescafe instead, together with white bread—the standard meal on Alao. But the kids at our workshop certainly did not object to the *luga* pudding!

One mother had a child with a nasty case of herpes on his face. Because carrageenan is anti-viral against herpes, we took time to whip up a *luga*-based skin cream, which everyone enjoyed slathering themselves with. All in all, a wonderfully fun and productive day. Thanks, Alao!

REFLECTIONS SYMPOSIUM

From the margins to the mainstream

The Asian Fisheries Society has travelled a long way in making gender and fisheries a priority concern. Meryl Williams reflects on the journey made so far

By **Meryl J Williams** (meryljwilliams@gmail.com), Chair of the Organizing Committee of GAF3 Symposium. The views expressed in this article are the personal views of the author

In this article, I would like to reflect on the journey so far that the Asian Fisheries Society (AFS), the pre-eminent and mainstream fisheries and aquaculture professional society in Asia-Pacific, has taken towards making gender in fisheries and aquaculture, with all its angles and complexities, a mainstream topic on its programmes.

The AFS was created in 1984. Within two years it established a major and comprehensive triennial forum, the Asian Fisheries Forum, now called the Asian Fisheries and Aquaculture Forum (see www.9afaf.org). Along with the Forum, the interests and themes of the AFS have included several national chapters (India, Japan, and Taiwan); specialist networks, for example, fish health and social science; thematic conferences, for example, cage culture in Asia; and a scientific journal, *Asian Fisheries Science*.

In 1995, a photo competition, organized by PADEK of Cambodia, graphically highlighted the role of women in fisheries. Following this, in 1998, women in fisheries became a new programme theme, introduced by the Thailand Department of Fisheries through an International Symposium on Women in Asian Fisheries, and treated with seriousness by the leaders of the AFS. Indeed, in his welcome remarks, the Director General pointed out that one-third of his staff consisted of women.

OLIVIER BARBAROUX

Chinese fisherwoman at a harbour. Women in fisheries became a programme theme of the AFS in 1998

The papers presented were stimulating, many descriptive but some analytical as well. One of the more memorable aspects of this event was the reaction from the male attendees at the Forum. The most common question the organizers, male and female, received, was "can men attend?" Social science topics were not new to the AFS but somehow this topic seemed different. The implication was that this was not a totally serious issue and would only be of interest to women. I am pleased to point out that the idea of the symposium was actually the initiative of a man, Dr M.C. Nandeesha, who then was working on aquaculture development in Cambodia and had, previously, in 1994, organized a Cambodia Women in Fisheries Conference and in 1996 an Indochina Women in Fisheries Conference. I am also pleased to report that many men as well as women attended the 1998 Symposium and took an active part in the discussions.

Undeterred, even emboldened, we went global, with the 2001 Global Symposium on Women in Fisheries. The papers, largely contributed rather than invited, were still predominantly descriptive, but slowly, more research and analysis was entering the discourse. We were and still are trying to find our feet in terms of a firm logical base. Some contributors were driven by feminist and human welfare considerations; others by theme-based research such as small-scale aquaculture, or fish trade and women. Women's development, fisheries and aquaculture development, regional and national comparisons were all addressed. One important result was that a paper by Mary Huang was one of the first in the world to raise the issue, later confirmed in more detailed studies, that HIV/AIDS was an unfortunately prominent disease in many fishing communities. This dimension had not been picked up by even countries taking AIDS action seriously, but it now is.

Our next Symposium—the 2004 First Global Symposium on Gender and Fisheries—attempted to make the transition from 'women in fisheries' to 'gender and fisheries'. We also attempted to attract a greater research focus by going beyond the more descriptive work. Women in seafood processing became more prominent as the whole fish supply was taken more into account. Thoughtful papers on women's economic contributions, the gender dimensions of fisheries management, and power and empowerment aspects of aquaculture development were explored.

The 2007 Second Global Symposium on Gender and Fisheries continued many of these themes, with a strong emphasis on reaching women through microfinance, self-help groups and development projects. The globalization and marketization of fisheries received attention, as did the lack of access of many women to training to access new aquaculture technologies.

Throughout this more than a decade, the fisheries and aquaculture sector had made little progress globally in addressing gender issues, despite the burgeoning importance of dynamic, high investment supply chains to provide fish to markets across international boundaries. FAO, especially in Africa, had started to codify good practice on gender in fisheries, but the mainstream fisheries instruments, such as the FAO Committee on Fisheries paid no attention to the topic. Slowly, this may be changing however, if the 2010 Global Conference on Aquaculture (Phuket, September 2010) is any barometer. This decadal event did have an Expert Panel partly addressing gender issues (Expert Panel VI.3 on Human Capacity Development and Gender Issues) and its report was well received at the Global Conference.

The Third Global Symposium on Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries at the April 2011 Ninth Asian Fisheries and Aquaculture Forum promises to be a well-attended and lively two-day event.

The Third Global Symposium on Gender in Aquaculture and Fisheries at the April 2011 Ninth Asian Fisheries and Aquaculture Forum promises to be a well-attended and lively two-day event. It will break new ground in terms of breadth and depth of papers, which will be reflected in the proceedings expected later in the year. In addition, FAO will be holding a focused invitation-only consultation to brainstorm future priorities on gender in aquaculture and fisheries. We remain quietly confident that, along with the new small-scale fisheries declaration, the United Nation's UN Women organization, and the ICSF's Recasting the Net initiative, we may be seeing a groundswell of support for gender and fisheries entering the mainstream of fisheries.

The AFS's interests in gender are broadly to help the development of the sector through ensuring equality of access to men and women in professional and industry terms, and in giving the sector access to the broadest and best expertise. Individual Society members and supporters have more activist agendas which are not precluded from the broader interests of the Society. Although we may sometimes think that AFS has progressed only slowly, though surely, on gender and fisheries, I note that other mainstream professional societies in fisheries and aquaculture have made almost no progress, with the possible exception of the World Aquaculture Society.

Q & A

Interview with Solene Smith, Coastal Links leader, Langebaan, South Africa

By **Jackie Sunde** (jsunde@telkomsa.net), Member, ICSF

Solene, in November 2002, following the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in South Africa, you said to *Yemaya* "my dream is that in ten years time fisher people themselves will be in Marine and Coastal Management. This dream is within our reach, it is possible if we stand together. We can achieve this, if we stand and work together." What has happened to this dream?

We were so inspired by the fishers that we met at the Summit from all over the world who were organizing and fighting for the rights of small-scale fishing communities. We went home and began to organize at local community levels.

What has changed in your community in the past nine years?

At the time of the World Summit small-scale fishers had been largely excluded from the new fishing rights regime in South Africa, which favoured the large commercial companies. The new policy was also based on individual quotas and this had caused enormous tensions in our communities because a few fishers had got quotas but most had been left out.It also introduced an individualistic and corrupt mindset into the fisheries. In 2004 we launched 'Coastal Links', which was a network of community-based organizations representing fishing communities and we began to organize in each of the main fishing towns. In those days we didn't have a lot of information about the policy and we depended a great deal on Masifundise for training and support. With their help we undertook a range of actions including protest marches and taking the Minister of Environmental Affairs to court. We stood together, however, and this was the key because for the first time fishers up and down were speaking out with one voice. This forced the Fisheries Department to take us seriously and in 2007 the Minister hosted a Small-scale Fisheries Summit where, for the first time, the government acknowledged our rights and admitted that we had been excluded. This was a real turning point. A Small-scale Fisheries National Task Team was then established to take this process forward. This was when my dream began to come true because for the first time we, as fishers, were represented on this body and we were able to participate in developing a new policy for small-scale fishers.

How have women been involved in this process?

Women have led this process and the new Draft Small-scale Fisheries Policy that has now been put on the table recognizes the role that women play in small-scale fisheries and commits the policy to promoting women's involvement in the sector. We have demanded a community-based policy that recognizes that fishers' rights are human rights and that the new policy must contribute towards improving the quality of life in our communities. We, as women, have organized workshops on our own where we have tried to identify strategies for taking our issues forward within Coastal Links. Its been a struggle and I have had to learn new ways of dealing with conflict amongst the fishers in my community, to give leadership and to insist that the men create opportunities for women to be involved.

What challenges lie ahead for the women of Coastal Links?

We still have obstacles to face: poaching levels are high and we need to work towards excluding the middleman in the marketing process so that women can really benefit. This is a real challenge because the established industry still controls the marketing of most of the fish and until we can change these power relations, very little will change. My dream now is to establish local co-operatives and to enable women to become involved in setting up local fish markets, doing catering with seafood and making crafts with local shells.I also hope that we can establish real co-management in all of our fishing villages and towns. We need to address some of the social problems facing our communities and make sure that the new policy makes a difference. I hope one day I can feel proud to tell my grand-children that I was part of this struggle for fisher's rights.

YEMAYA MAMA ...thinks seven generations ahead!

DOCUMENT

Gender dimensions of agricultural and rural employment

Gender dimensions of agricultural and rural employment: Differentiated pathways out of poverty—Status, trends and gaps. Published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the International Labour Office; Rome, 2010

This review is by **Nilanjana Biswas** (nilanjanabiswas@yahoo.com), independent researcher

Seventy per cent of the world population consists of rural communities, subsisting on agriculture, forestry, fisheries and livestock for their livelihoods. The poorest within these communities are often women and young girls—the very ones who hold the socioeconomic fabric of rural communities together. How can the deepening poverty of rural communities be addressed? Can rural employment help to lift women out of poverty? What keeps rural women tied to positions of economic disadvantage? What impact are the changing patterns of rural employment in a rapidly globalizing world having on the lives of women and men? How can policy help poverty alleviation and equitable growth?

Addressing such questions, this report is an assessment of how gender might determine "differentiated pathways out of poverty" in rural areas. An outcome of a global workshop jointly organized by three international agencies—the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the International Labour Office (ILO)—it presents the "latest thinking" on the gender dimensions of rural and agricultural employment. The report rests on the cornerstone of the United Nation's Decent Work Agenda, which calls for the creation of better jobs both for women and men, social protection for all rural workers, the uniform application of labour standards, and the promotion of equitable and representative rural institutions.

Although the fisheries sector has not received specific consideration, because of the many commonalities between women's work in the fisheries and in other core sectors of the rural economy, the report has much to offer by way of insights and lessons. In most regions of the world, rural employment is highly segmented with women disproportionately employed in low-quality jobs lacking dignity and social protection. There is a consequent gender differential in earnings, with women earning much less than men for a given type of work. Women put in many more hours into unpaid rather than paid work due to competing demands of care responsibilities and non-market tasks which diminishes women's total labour income and keeps them chronically exhausted.

Impacting sharply upon rural employment are global trends including financial and food crises, increasing out-migration, the feminization of rural activities, international trade, the diversification of rural economies and also, child labour. As a result, patterns of rural employment are changing, but even so, certain entrenched gender inequalities often only grow deeper. In the context, what are the policy options?

The report takes the view that for policies to be effective, they need to be designed effectively not as standalone measures but as a set of mutually reinforcing strategies. The cornerstone of effective policy must be the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda: fundamental rights, including the right to collective bargaining, employment creation for more and better quality jobs, social protection for the work environment to be safe and secure, and finally, social dialogue, in ways that represent women fully in organized collectives and unions. In this context, the report highlights the efforts of the post-harvest fisheries operators in the Gambia as a fine example of grassroots participation in the elaboration of national policy. This report is available at: www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1638e/i1638e00.htm

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Writers and potential contributors to *YEMAYA*, please note that write-ups should be brief, about 500 words. They could deal with issues that are of direct relevance to women and men of fishing communities. They could also focus on recent research or on meetings and workshops that have raised gender issues in fisheries. Also welcome are life stories of women and men of fishing communities working towards a sustainable fishery or for a recognition of their work within the fishery. Please also include a one-line biographical note on the writer.

Please do send us comments and suggestions to make the newsletter more relevant. We look forward to hearing from you and to receiving regular write-ups for the newsletter.